Senate Backs Curb On CBW Program

8-12-69

By Spencer Rich
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate gave unanimous approval yesterday to an amendment limiting the Defense Department's chemical and biological warfare activities.

The 91-to-0 vote came after Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) and Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird had endorsed over the weekend the language of an anti-CBW package. The package was worked out last Friday by Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre (D-N.H.) and a bloc of eight senators who had sponsored individual amendments of their own.

The amendment approved yesterday does not altogether bar Pentagon CBW activities. The military procurement bill, to which it was attached, still authorizes $297 million (concealed under various headings) for CBW programs.

But the McIntyre language imposes a variety of curbs on the shipment here and abroad of lethal chemical and biological agents, requires detailed notice to Congress on shipment and testing, forbids open-air testing except under specified conditions, and bars the procurement of CBW delivery systems for offensive warfare.

One Senate aide said the ban on procurement of delivery systems appears to be an attempt to write into law the pledge long given by U.S. officials—that the U.S. will not use CBW agents as offensive weapons. McIntyre said this section "makes clear our opposition to the use of lethal CBW agents as offensive weapons and prohibits expenditure of funds for any device designed to deliver these agents."

Sources said the $297 million still in the bill for CBW was largely for defensive devices against CBW attack by others against the U.S., and for things like smoke and incendiary devices. The Armed Services Committee had cut out an additional $16 million for CBW offensive research earlier.

McIntyre has indicated that he believed offensive CBW weapons are not needed by the U.S. because, if attacked with such weapons, the U.S. would not respond in kind but would instead respond with other, more conventional weapons in its arsenal.

See SENATE, A10, Col. 1

Senate Approves Curb On Germ, Gas Program

SENATE, From A1

After the vote on the CBW amendment had been disposed of, Stennis said the Senate should not keep chopping away at the $20 billion procurement authorization—for which he is floor manager—lest it knock out conventional weapons needed to meet the nation's military commitments to NATO, SEATO, Vietnam, Korea, Japan and other areas.

"We may want to change that commitment some day," said Stennis, "but nobody's now proposing to change, and that's what this hardware they're attacking is for." He was referring to attempts to kill the MBT-70 tank and the proposed new aircraft carrier. The Senate has not yet taken a vote on those issues.

He called the term "military-industrial complex" a "slander and a libel" and hinted that he and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) possibly might not be far apart on reducing some of the nation's overseas commitments. But until then, he said, funds and weapons should not be cut.

Despite Stennis' plea, Sen. Joseph D. Tydings (D-Md.) immediately called up an amendment to cut the Defense Department's special emergency fund from $100 million to $50 million. "It is strictly a matter of economy," said Tydings, adding that the amount he proposed to slash was basically a special research, development and procurement fund for Vietnam that could be supplied if needed by transfer of funds from elsewhere in the Department.

Stennis offered to compromise at $75 million and Tydings accepted. The Senate then endorsed the compromise by a 94-to-0 vote.

As the Senate adjourned for the day, the pending business was a Fulbright amendment to cut the Pentagon's $350 million budget for social science-type research by some $45 million.

The anti-CBW package adopted earlier require:

- Detailed semi-annual reports to Congress on spending.
- A ban on delivery system procurement for lethal and disease-producing CBW agents.
- No storage of such CBW agents outside the U.S., or deployment of delivery systems outside the U.S., without notice to the foreign government involved and to Congress.
- No shipment of such CBW agents within the U.S. without advance notice to Congress and certification by the Surgeon General that it will not endanger public health.
- Detoxification before disposal.
- No open-air tests unless certified as needed for national security by the Defense Secretary and as not dangerous by the Surgeon General, with advance notice to Congress.
- No shipment abroad or testing abroad if this violates international law.
- All CBW funds henceforth to be carried in the defense procurement bill.